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ABSTRACT

Part of an international series of amply illustrated, colorful, small size books designed for children ages 5 to 10, this volume presents information on the life and customs of Australia and what it is like to live on the biggest island in the world. Color illustrations and maps show the habitats of birds, flowers, and animals native to Australia and what everyday life is like. The early history of Australia, modern life, the experiences of school children, childhood games, and the history of the aborigines are covered. (NL)

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Australia: On the Other Side of the World

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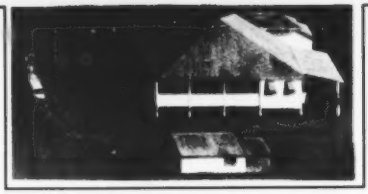

Written by Penny Stanley-Baker
Illustrated by Pierre-Marie Valat

Specialist Advisers:
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Australia: On the Other Side of the World

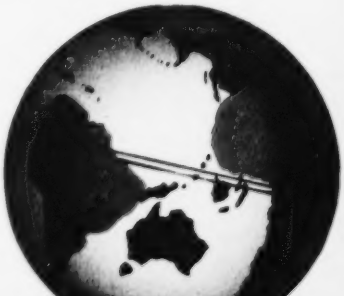
What is it like to live on the biggest island in the world?

COOTE
LOWE'S
ICE CREAM

Australia is on the opposite side of the world from Ottawa or New York. If you flew from either city, it would take from lunchtime of one day until lunchtime of the next before you got to Sydney, Australia's biggest city.

Sometimes things do seem back-to-front 'down under'.

Daytime in Europe is nighttime in Australia. The seasons are upside-down too. Spring in America is autumn in Australia. Can you imagine Christmas in the summer holidays...? However hot it is on Christmas Day, Santa still comes in his warm winter coat. The presents and roast turkey and Christmas pudding are followed by a swim in the sea to cool off!



Australia is an island almost the same size as the USA or Canada. But only 16 million people live there, mainly in the big cities along the coasts.

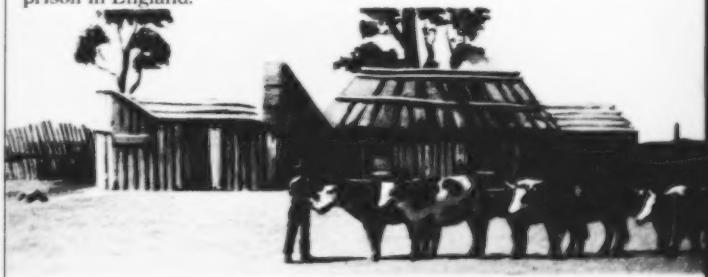
1. Banyan tree
2. Baobab tree
3. Banksia flower
4. Kangaroo-paw flower
5. Eucalyptus
6. Desert pea
7. Tobacco

8. Kangaroo
9. Monitor lizard
10. Thorny devil
11. Dingo
12. Frilled lizard
13. Bowerbird

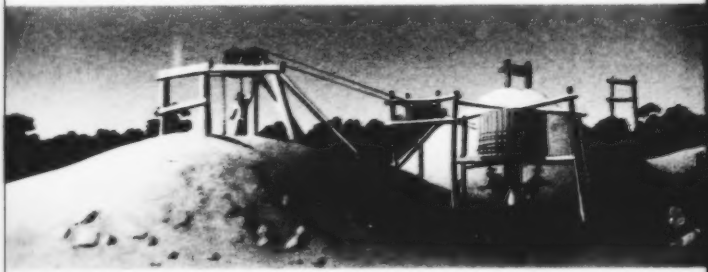
9

Brisbane
16
Canberra
Sydney
17
Melbourne
18
TASMANIA
14. Pygmy glider
15. Emu
16. Koala
17. Duckbill platypus
18. Tasmanian devil

1. It was Captain Cook, an English sailor, who first put Australia on the map. In 1788, the first white men settled there. They were English convicts: highwaymen, pickpockets, sheepstealers, sent to work in Australia instead of going to prison in England.



3. Other people settled in Australia too. The guards and governors of the convicts, with their wives and families. Then came explorers, farmers, and tradesmen. Life was hard and food was scarce. They had to start from nothing.



5. The discovery of gold brought people flocking to Australia in even greater numbers from all over the world. The gold rush may be over, but Australia is rich in other precious metals and minerals.

2. When they completed their sentences, the convicts were freed. Some went back to England, but many stayed on in Australia, where they felt they had a chance of a better life. They worked as servants, or as shopkeepers or farmers.

4. They had to clear trees, build houses and boats, make roads. Seed grain was brought out in ships, and the farmers started to plant crops and to establish herds of sheep and cattle. A lot of people fell sick and died, but others prospered.

6. You can even try your luck at opal mining. If you go to an old opal-mine site, you can go 'fossicking' among the rubble left around, or chip away at the rock with a pickax, and find a few of these lovely semiprecious stones.

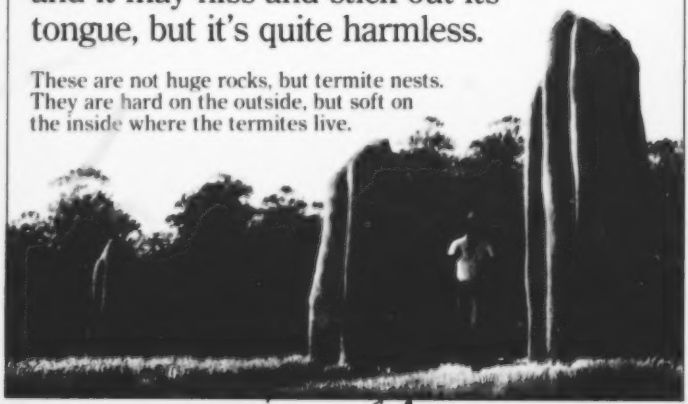
13

Weird and wondrous desert dwellers

This bird of paradise, a visitor from New Guinea, thrives in the Northern Territory.

At dead of night an eerie howl shatters the silence, echoed by an answering howl further off. **Dingos** (1) are calling to each other. They came to Australia a long time ago, with the Aborigines. Now they roam the land in small packs, hunting rabbits and other animals. Though it looks so fierce, this little dragon lizard, the **thorny devil** (2), is no bigger than your hand and only eats ants. The **blue-tongued lizard** (3) is about 17 in. long. Surprise it basking in the sun and it may hiss and stick out its tongue, but it's quite harmless.

These are not huge rocks, but termite nests. They are hard on the outside, but soft on the inside where the termites live.



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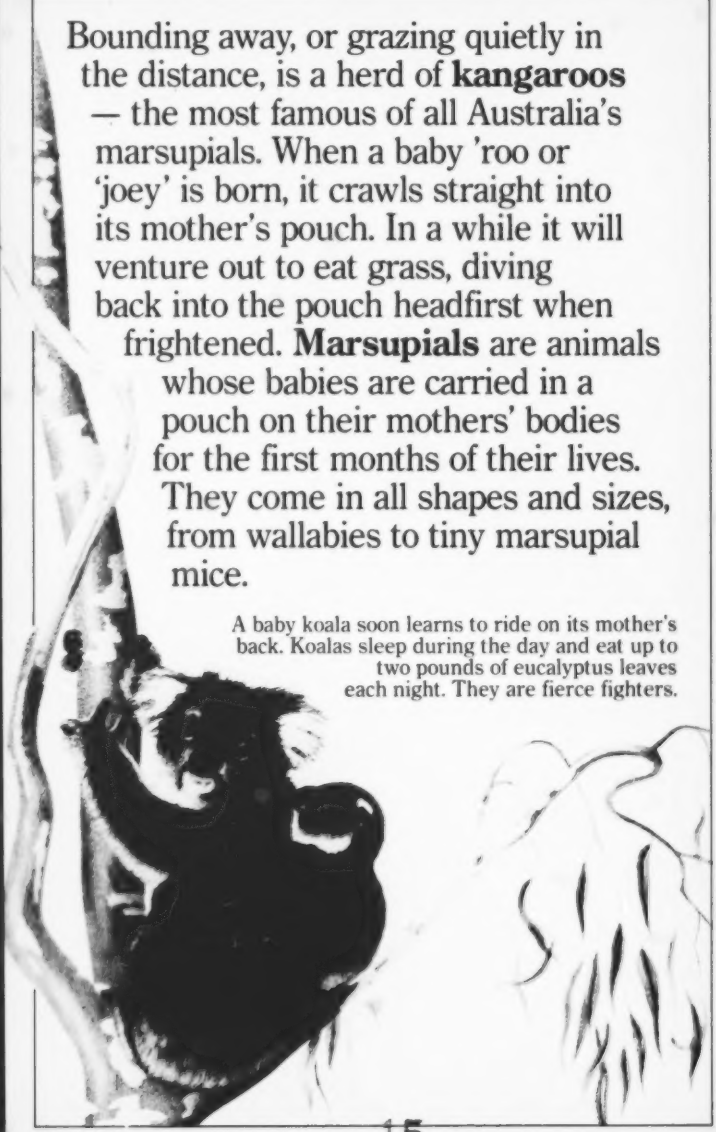
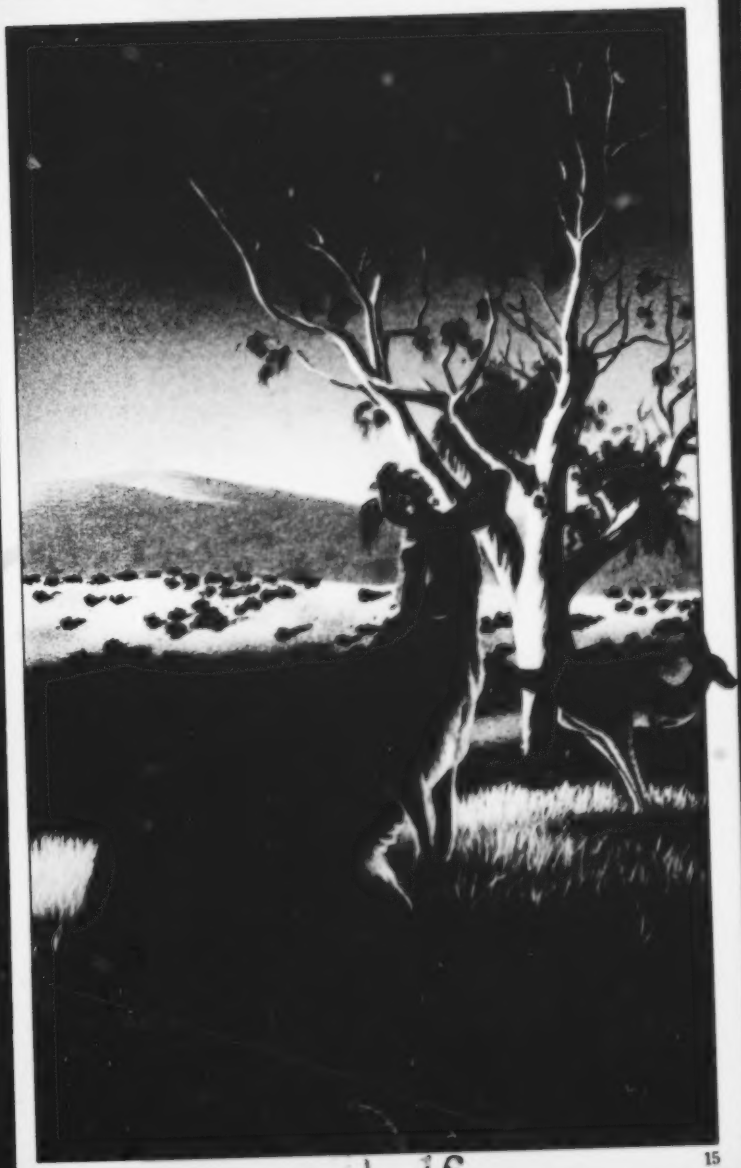
Bounding away, or grazing quietly in the distance, is a herd of **kangaroos** — the most famous of all Australia's marsupials. When a baby 'roo or 'joey' is born, it crawls straight into its mother's pouch. In a while it will venture out to eat grass, diving back into the pouch headfirst when frightened. **Marsupials** are animals whose babies are carried in a pouch on their mothers' bodies for the first months of their lives. They come in all shapes and sizes, from wallabies to tiny marsupial mice.

A baby koala soon learns to ride on its mother's back. Koalas sleep during the day and eat up to two pounds of eucalyptus leaves each night. They are fierce fighters.





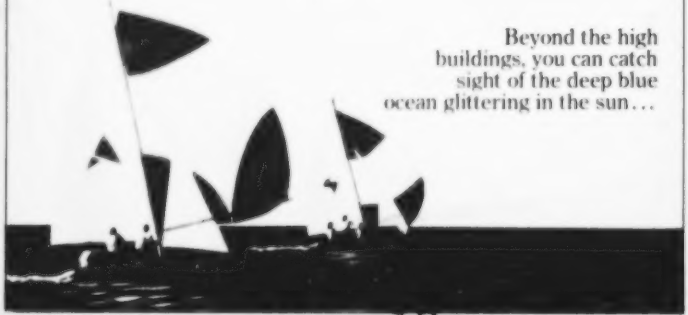
16

An outdoor life... even in the city

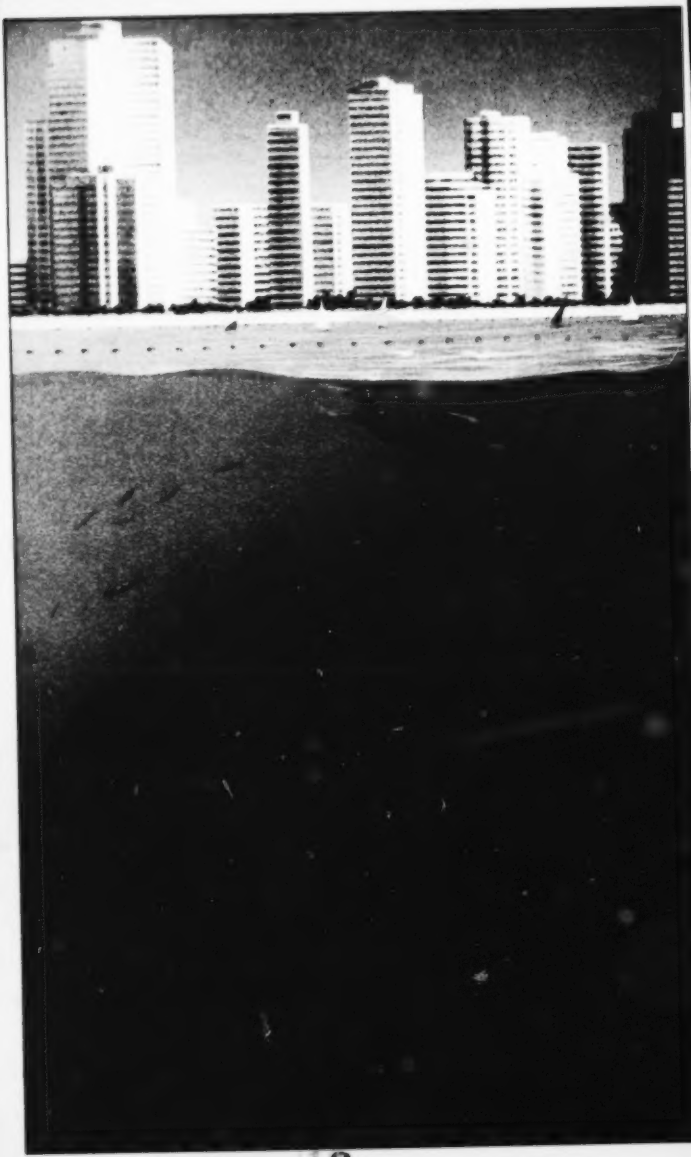
Australian cities are like any others; busy, noisy, traffic-filled. But because it is warm most of the year, Australian children spend a lot of time out of doors.

Most schoolchildren wear uniforms.

Schoolchildren eat packed lunches outdoors all year round. They play a lot of team sports. Every city has its parks, with jungle gyms and swings for small children and plenty of space for a family game of cricket. Even in midwinter you can have a barbecue or a birthday party or your school sports day in the park, among the joggers and sunbathers.



Beyond the high buildings, you can catch sight of the deep blue ocean glittering in the sun...



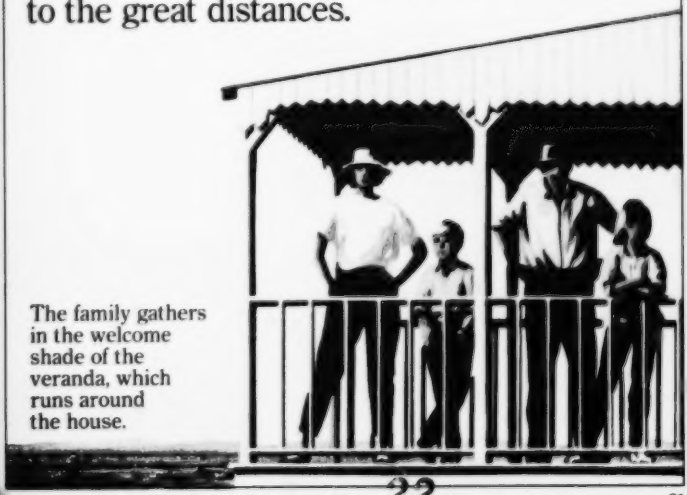
Jellyfish can sting.

More beaches than any other country in the world! The sea never gets very cold, so people sail, swim and surf all the year round, to say nothing of deep-sea diving, windsurfing and fishing.

Australian children are good swimmers, but they are taught to stay close to the shore. There may be dangerous currents, or even sharks. A line of floats across the bay shows where the safest waters are. Sharks attack even in shallow water. If lifeguards sight a shark's fin cutting through the water, they send everyone dashing to the shore. The most dangerous of all is the huge white shark.

21

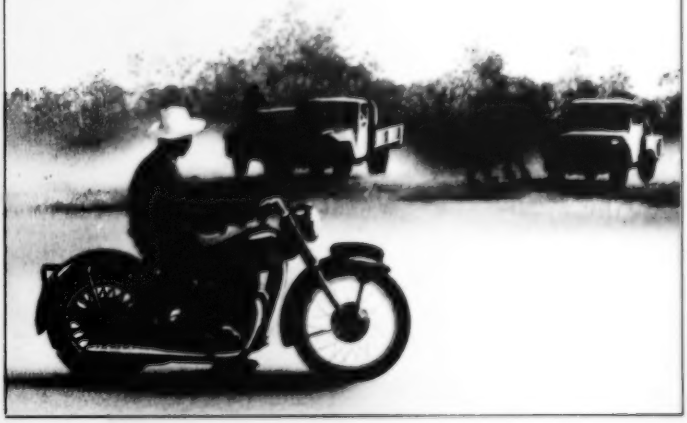
Can you imagine living so far out in the country that your nearest neighbors are several hours' drive away? That's what it's like in the Australian **outback.** The farms have to be big because grass is scarce, so animals need a lot of space to get enough food to eat. Farmers and their families live on huge 'stations', which are often hundreds of miles apart.
Roads are sometimes just dirt tracks. People use strong trucks with special grilles to protect windshields and headlights, in case they bump into a kangaroo or a cow at night.
Helicopters are often used due to the great distances.



The family gathers in the welcome shade of the veranda, which runs around the house.

The flying doctor pays a call. Stations have airstrips where small planes can land.

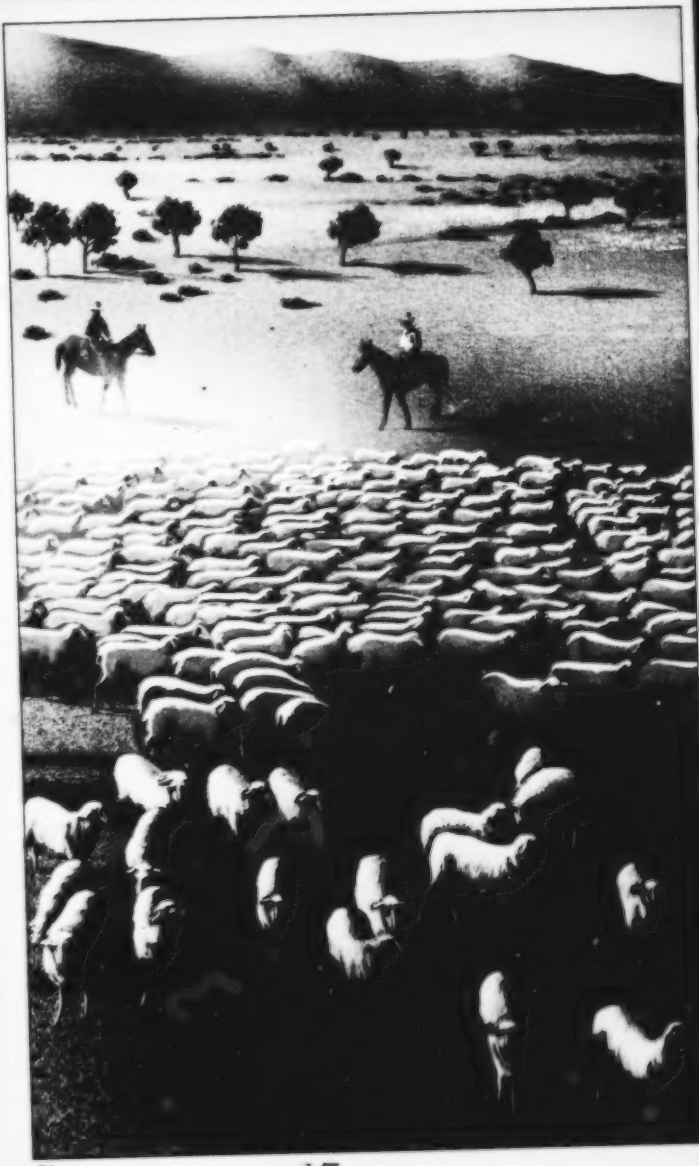
Each family has a medicine chest. Its contents are carefully numbered. When someone is ill, the family radios in to the doctor, who can tell them which number medicine would be best to use. This saves a long, slow drive into town and a possibly fatal delay. Farmer, manager and 'jackaroos' (farm workers) live on the station. Once the rounding up of the huge herds of sheep and cattle was all done on horseback, but now motorbikes, trucks and even helicopters are used.

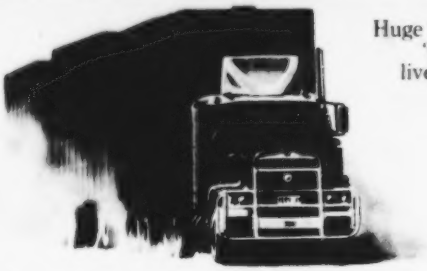


The farmhouse or homestead is designed to keep out the heat and the flies. Many houses stand on stilts as well, so that snakes can't get in. There are flyscreens on the doors and windows. Rainwater runs off the corrugated iron roof and is collected in rain tanks. Everyone on the station works hard. They have to know how to make and fix things which go wrong. Children soon learn to help around the place. Most of them have horses of their own and are good riders. **What about school?** Many children don't go to school — school comes to them, by radio! They do their work by tuning in to the 'School of the Air'.

Warning!
Kangaroos crossing!

The teachers may be hundreds of miles away, but each pupil can talk to them as if they were together in one giant classroom.





Huge trucks, knows as 'road trains', take livestock to market.

Australia produces more wool than any other country in the world.

The best wool comes from the merino, which has a thicker coat than any other sheep. There are ten times as many sheep as people in Australia. All year round there are miles of fences which need to be checked and repaired. Cattle branding, lamb marking, sheep dipping and shearing take place once a year and are busy times for the farmer. The farmer's worst enemies are bushfires, drought and floods.

At shearing time, teams of sheepshearers move around from station to station, working from dawn till dusk each day.

The Queen of Great Britain is the Queen of Australia too. Her picture appears on one side of all coins. On the other side are typical native animals, like this pygmy glider.

The frilled lizard looks quite fierce when it raises its ruff and rears up on its hind legs. It might give you a nasty nip, but nothing worse.

The echidna, or spiny anteater, and the duckbill platypus are the only animals in the world to lay eggs and suckle their young. Echidna eggs hatch in their mother's pouch. When the babies' quills have grown, they move to a nest.

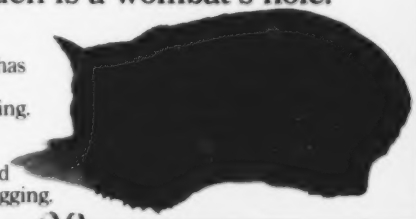
The lyrebird has a very fine tail which can fan out like a peacock's. Lyrebirds can imitate all sorts of sounds, from birdsong to motorbikes, chainsaws, even dogs barking.

Is it a duck, is it a seal, is it a beaver? No, it's a duckbill platypus! It has a flat beak and webbed feet like a duck, a strong tail like a beaver, and waterproof fur like a seal.

The emu is one of the tallest birds in the world, and also one of the fastest. One emu egg weighs as much as twelve hens' eggs. Father emu sits on the eggs and feeds the young.

Bushwalking is a serious business. Once you leave the city, you will find yourself in the Australian bush. Be prepared. You'll need: tough shoes or boots, a hat, a backpack, water, a good map. For a real taste of the bush, add a gum leaf to the tea you brew in your 'billy', the tin can all bushwalkers carry. If you do light a fire, be sure to put it out by covering it with earth. Bushfires are dangerous!

Watch your step! A deep burrow like a badger's den is a wombat's hole.



This plump, furry fellow has strong front paws and shovel-like claws for digging. Mother wombat's pouch opens backwards so her babies are not covered with earth when she is digging.

The kookaburra can kill a fish, a lizard, a mouse or even a snake with one stroke of its strong beak.

Peering at you from high up a tree is a possum. He is after the grubs that live under the bark.

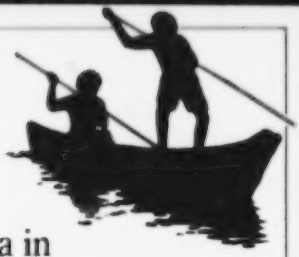
In the wild, **possums** live on insects and grubs. They quite often move into people's houses uninvited, raiding trash cans and helping themselves to household scraps.

Listen! That loud cackle of laughter overhead is the **kookaburra,** "merry, merry king of the bush is he"; a sound like a bell tinkling is the **bellbird;** a soft low whistle followed by the sharp crack of a whip is the **whipbird.**

A merry chatter overhead and a flash of color will be **lorikeets** or **parrots.**

31

The Aborigines were the first people to live in Australia.



They came across the sea in prehistoric times. Many still live in the bush or in the Australian desert as their ancestors did. They do not grow crops or keep animals to eat. Once the boys are old enough, they join the men to go hunting for food: kangaroos, goannas (big lizards), emus, duck. For weapons they carry spears, a spear-thrower and boomerangs.

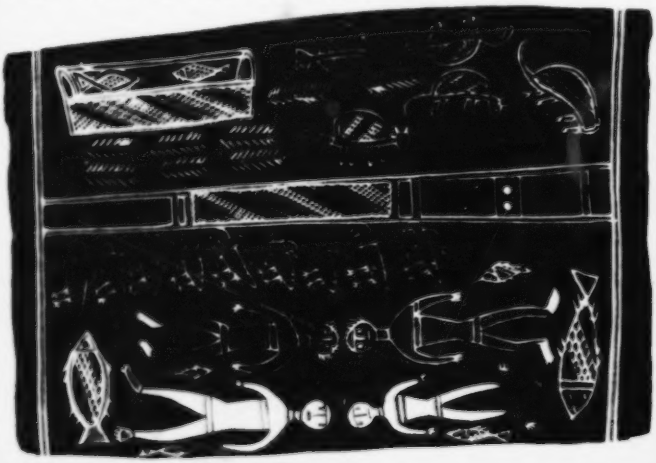
Each color in the Aborigine flag has a meaning: yellow is the sun, black the Aborigines, red the earth.

Aborigines are nomads, always on the move. Their houses are simple shelters.

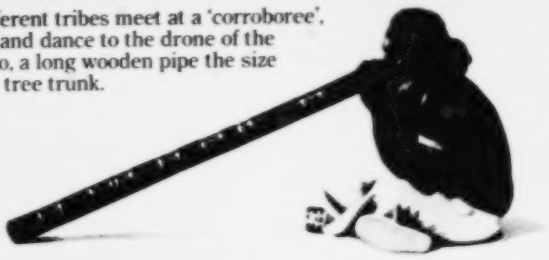
Aborigines use four colors in their bark paintings: red and yellow, which are both made from ochre in the earth, white from chalk and black from charcoal.

The women and children do the picking and gathering and prepare the food: lily bulbs, nuts, grass seed to grind into flour, yams...even honey ants and beetle grubs are good to eat. A piece of hollowed-out wood or bark makes a dish to hold things or to eat out of, echidna quills make sewing needles, and an emu skin is a cozy sleeping bag for a baby.

Paintings tell stories of 'Dreamings'. This is the Milky Way Dreaming — it tells how the Milky Way was made.

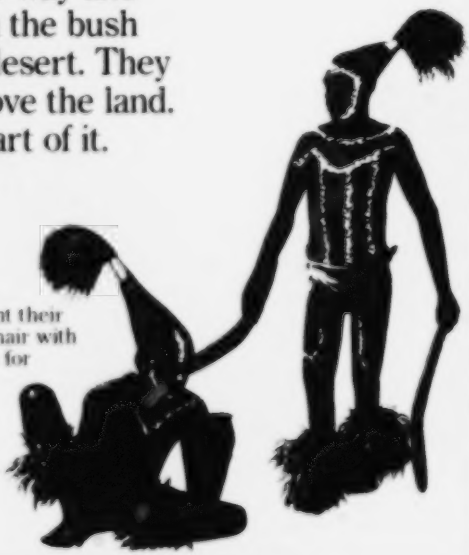


When different tribes meet at a 'corroboree', they sing and dance to the drone of the didgeridoo, a long wooden pipe the size of a small tree trunk.

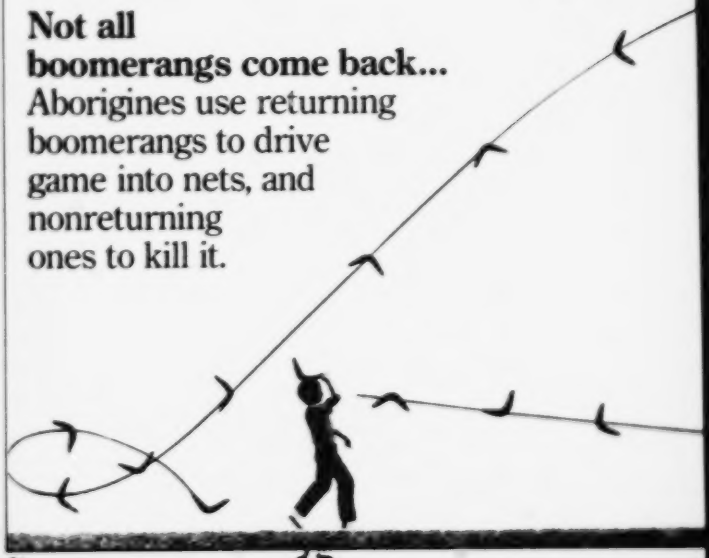


The Aboriginal Law is based on Dreamtime: the old stories told by their ancestors about the beginning of the world. Each Aboriginal tribe is like one big family. Everything is shared equally. Aborigines are expert at finding their way and surviving in the bush and in the desert. They know and love the land. They feel part of it.

Men and boys paint their bodies, faces and hair with elaborate patterns for ceremonies.



Not all boomerangs come back...
Aborigines use returning boomerangs to drive game into nets, and nonreturning ones to kill it.



Nonreturning boomerangs are longer and straighter.

Be careful when throwing a boomerang. Never throw it near houses or people. Always throw a boomerang down as if you were aiming at the ground a few yards ahead of you. Raise your arm and let the boomerang go as your arm comes down. It should loop around and up. But it takes practice!

Books of Discovery for children five through ten...

Young Discovery Library is an international undertaking — the series is now published in nine countries. It is the world's first pocket encyclopedia for children, 120 titles will be published.

Each title in the series is an education on the subject covered: a collaboration among the author, the illustrator, an advisory group of elementary school teachers and an academic specialist on the subject.

The goal is to respond to the endless curiousity of children, to fascinate and educate.

billabong: a pool of water in the bush.
brumby: a wild horse.
cobber: a close friend; your pal.
dinkum: genuine; the real thing.
furphy: a false story; a rumor.
no hoper: a useless person from whom nothing can be expected.
offsider: an assistant or helper.
sheila: a girl or young woman.
shout: to treat someone to a drink or meal. "It's my shout, cobber."
swag: a traveler's bag, used by bushwalkers.
tucker: food.
walkabout: a short, informal leave from work. Sort of like playing hooky from school.
whinge: to complain or whine.
wowser: a stiff or formal person; 'goody-goody.'

...in southwestern Australia.

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Australia: On the Other Side of the World,
illustrated by Pierre-Marie Valat

- **Why do Australians celebrate Christmas in the summer?**
- **What do thorny devils eat?**
- **How do you go fossicking?**

- **What is an Aborigine Dreaming?**
- **Where is the outback?**
- **How do children go to the School of the Air?**

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